

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 149849
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PAGE 02 STATE 149849

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S E C R E T STATE 149849

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 584 - JUNE 13, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. LEBANON. THE MAJORITY OF ISRAELI FORCES, INCLUDING NEARLY ALL ARMOR AND ARTILLERY, WITHDREW FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON YESTERDAY. ALL ISRAELI TROOPS ARE EXPECTED TO BE OUT OF LEBANON TODAY. THE ISRAELIS WILL MAKE THEIR FINAL WITHDRAWAL FROM BINT JIBAYL; THE MOVE REPORTEDLY IS BEING ORCHESTRATED FOR THE MEDIA.

2. MAJOR HADDAD AND HIS FORCES REMAIN A POTENTIAL OBSTACLE TO UNIFIL'S OCCUPATION OF THE AREA WHICH THE IDF HAD CONTROLLED. THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM BETWEEN HADDAD AND THE UN FORCES IS THEIR DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS OF HIS ROLE. FOR HADDAD AND THE MAJORITY OF LEBANESE CHRISTIANS IN THE SOUTH, AS WELL AS A SIZABLE NUMBER OF MUSLIMS, HADDAD'S FORCES REPRESENT THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE ARMY WHICH DEFENDED THEIR VILLAGES FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGAINST

ALIEN -- PALESTINIAN -- ATTEMPTS TO DOMINATE THEM. PRIOR TO THE ISRAELI INVASION, HADDAD'S UNITS CONTROLLED ABOUT HALF OF THE AREA FROM WHICH THE ISRAELIS ARE WITHDRAWING.
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 149849

3. HADDAD'S FOLLOWERS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE UN TROOPS HAVE THE WILL TO PROTECT LEBANESE VILLAGES. THEY CONSIDER PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION AND SHELLING OF THEIR VILLAGES AS PROOF OF THIS. AS A RESULT, THEY SEEM UNWILLING TO TURN OVER THEIR SECURITY TO UNIFIL UNITS. HADDAD, MOREOVER, REJECTS UN ATTEMPTS TO EQUATE HIS UNITS WITH THE PALESTINIANS.

4. TO UNIFIL COMMANDER ERSKINE, HADDAD'S FORCES ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PEACE. THEY HAVE PREVENTED UNIFIL FORCES FROM ENTERING THEIR VILLAGES. MORE WORRISOME TO ERSKINE, ACCORDING TO HIS INTERVIEW WITH ISRAEL RADIO ON JUNE 10, IS THE STATED ISRAELI INTENTION TO TURN OVER THEIR LAST STRONGHOLDS IN LEBANON TO THE CHRISTIANS. IN ADDITION, THE ISRAELIS REPORTEDLY HAVE GIVEN THE CHRISTIANS ADDITIONAL ARMORED VEHICLES TO BEEF UP THEIR FORCES.

5. BY CONTRAST, THE PALESTINIANS GENERALLY HAVE COOPERATED WITH UNIFIL. DESPITE EARLY CLASHES BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE PALESTINIANS NEAR TYRE, MOST PALESTINIANS REALIZED THAT GOOD RELATIONS WITH UNIFIL WERE THE KEY TO THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. MOREOVER, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REINFILTRATE FORCES INTO THE SOUTH WITH ONLY MINIMAL UN RESISTANCE. FINALLY, THE UN TREATMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS AS A LEGITIMATE PARTY TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON IS GIVING THE PLO AN INTERNATIONAL STATUS EQUAL TO THAT OF THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES AND GREATER THAN THAT OF THE

ISRAELIS.

6. UNIFIL'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTHERN LEBANESE, PARTICULARLY THE CHRISTIANS, IS COMPLICATED BY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND HADDAD'S FORCES. THE GOVERNMENT GENERALLY HAS CARED LITTLE FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE SOUTHERN LEBANESE. BEIRUT'S CONCERN OVER THE SOUTH DEPENDS LARGELY ON HOW THE SITUATION THERE

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 149849

IMPACTS ON BEIRUT. IN THIS CONTEXT, HADDAD'S DEFENSE OF THE CHRISTIAN VILLAGES SERVES TO CREATE FRICTION WITHIN THE LEBANESE CABINET, AS WELL AS BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE IN BEIRUT.

7. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF HADDAD WERE REFLECTED IN LAST WEEK'S CABINET MEETING, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY BEIRUT. PRIME MINISTER HOSS, A MUSLIM, DEMANDED THAT HADDAD BE REMOVED. CHRISTIAN MINISTERS, REPRESENTING THE GENERAL FEELING WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY, REJECTED THIS. THE DISPUTE OVER THE FUTURE ROLE OF HADDAD'S FORCES REMAINS THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO THE SOUTH. IF HADDAD'S TROOPS ARE RECOGNIZED AS A PART OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, WHICH IS CURRENTLY THE FAVORED PLAN, THE MUSLIMS AND PALESTINIANS WILL PROTEST. IF NOT, HADDAD, WITH THE SUPPORT OF MANY CHRISTIANS, MAY OPPOSE THE ENTRY OF THE LEBANESE ARMY INTO CHRISTIAN VILLAGES.

8. ANOTHER PROBLEM FACING THE LEBANESE ARMY IS THE GROWING HOSTILITY OF REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS. DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE ARMY COMMAND STILL PLANS TO DEPLOY A 1000-MAN MIXED MUSLIM/CHRISTIAN UNIT TO THE SOUTH IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, ACCORDING TO SOURCES OF OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BEIRUT. (SECRET)

9. EGYPT. EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED PRESS REPORTS FROM AHRAH CORRESPONDENTS IN THE US PORTRAY US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AS CLOSER THAN EVER. THE ARTICLES GO ON TO SAY THAT THE US IS ABOUT TO RESUME A HIGHLY ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE EMBASSY NOTES THAT THIS NEW-FOUND EGYPTIAN OPTIMISM CLEARLY RESULTS FROM THE KAMEL AND GAMASY TALKS IN THE US. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

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PAGE 05 STATE 149849

10. WEST BANK. THE NEW ISRAELI MILITARY GOVERNOR FOR THE WEST BANK CONTINUES TO EVINCE A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS WHEN TALKING TO WEST BANK LEADERS, OUR JERUSALEM CONSULATE GENERAL REPORTED. THE CONSULATE BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNOR IS RECEIVING

GUIDANCE ON THIS APPROACH FROM HIGHER DEFENSE MINISTRY AUTHORITIES; SOME OBSERVERS THINK THIS "CHANGE IN STYLE" WHICH IN EFFECT PROMOTES AUTONOMY IS MORE ACCEPTABLE TO WEST BANKERS THAN A MINISTERIAL DECISION. (CONFIDENTIAL)

11. PDRY. THE RIVALRY BETWEEN PRESIDENT SALIM RUBA'I ALI AND NATIONAL FRONT PARTY SECRETARY ABD AL-FATAH ISMAIL, WHICH WAS GOING AGAINST ALI IN RECENT MONTHS, APPEARS AGAIN TO BE EVENING OUT. WHILE WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF THE POLITICAL MACHINATIONS SURROUNDING THE RIVALRY, THERE SEEMS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS APPRECIABLY WILL UNDERMINE THE

STABILITY OF THE REGIME. A SHOWDOWN COULD COME LATER IN THE YEAR, HOWEVER, IN CONNECTION WITH A PLANNED REORGANIZATION OF PDRY'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

12. ALI AND ISMAIL HAVE BEEN RIVALS SINCE THEIR EXTREMIST WING OF THE NATIONAL FRONT PARTY SEIZED POWER IN THE EARLY 1970S. AT THAT TIME, ISMAIL WAS LABELED PRO-SOVIET AND ALI A MAOIST. THE MORE DOCTRINAIRE ISMAIL IS STILL REGARDED AS CLOSE TO THE SOVIETS, BUT THE MORE PRAGMATIC ALI SEEMS TO BE VIEWED MORE AND MORE AS A MODERATE.

13. A KEY ASSET FOR ALI IN THE POWER STRUGGLE IS HIS STRONG POWER BASE IN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PROVINCES. ISMAIL, FOR HIS PART, CONTROLS THE NATIONAL FRONT PARTY APPARATUS. WITH SOVIET ASSISTANCE AND PROBABLY SOME CUBAN HELP AS
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 149849

WELL, HE IS RESTRUCTURING THE NATIONAL FRONT AS A MEANS OF INCREASING HIS CONTROL OF THE RANK-AND-FILE. (SECRET)
CHRISTOPHER

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